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Top spy dodges Cobo queries

By ERIC SHARP
Free Press Staff Writer

Looking more like a friendly college professor than America's head spy, Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the CIA, smilingly sidestepped all the juicy stuff Thursday.

Did the CIA really lose a nuclear spying device up in the Himalaya Mountains 13 years ago and avoid telling the Indian government about it?

No comment, Turner replied.

Did the CIA have any involvement with Russia's top United Nations employe, Arkady Schevchenko, who left his job last week over differences with his government and is in seclusion in New York?

"I am not confirming or denying what you say," Turner answered.

What does the CIA think of President Carter's decision against deploying the neutron bomb in the near future?

That's another area we can't go into, Turner said.

TURNER WAS IN DETROIT to address a meeting of the Economic Club at Cobo Hall. At a pre-luncheon press conference, a question-and-answer session with a group of college students and his after-lunch address, he ran into the major problem for all intelligence officials: You can't talk about a lot of your work until it has evolved from current events to history.

Outside magazine recently published a report that CIA expedition to India lost the nuclear-powered device, intended to monitor atom tests in China. Turner said comment might compromise the identities of people involved or jeopardize covert agreements between nations.

He said the Schevchenko case "is one of the most delicate

diplomatic situations" the State Department faces and "I am not about to muddy the waters."

TURNER STRESSED repeatedly that he believed the United States had the world's best intelligence network and is far ahead of the Soviets in the technical intelligence field, ranging from computers to spy satellites.

He noted that the CIA has come through three years of scathing criticism and outside examination and he feels the agency has been strengthened by that experience.

"I think that sometimes in the past we in the intelligence community got a little remote from the attitudes and standards of the country," Turner said.

He said the CIA is now subject to "surrogate" inspection by the president, Congress and an intelligence watchdog board, who insure for the public that the agency does not exceed the bounds of law.

Turner said that covert political meddling in the internal affairs of other nations was now under the strict control of the president and that assassination as a tool of foreign policy had been outlawed absolutely.

JOSEPH L. HUDSON JR., presiding officer at the Economic Club luncheon, expressed the confusion many Americans feel about their country's foreign policy by saying it is "difficult to understand the introduction of Soviet troops in Ethiopia and Angola and at the same time be told that detente is upon us and the SALT talks are moving along well."

"So much of what we do, so much of what we learn must be kept secret in the national interest," Turner said. He added that the public "should not be too quick to make heroes of" former CIA agents who have written accounts of their activities



UPI Photo

CIA Director Stansfield Turner in Detroit Thursday: "I think that sometimes in the past we in the intelligence community got a little remote..."

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